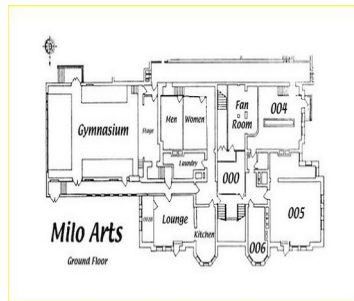


Intellectual on Skid Row.

Chapter -17-



By January of 1994 I existed on the fringes by working the labor market. I would job surf by way of the temporary employment services, doing one or two day assignments. It was just enough to keep me alive. But I had no medical or vacation benefits and food was always a huge problem. When **Rick Mann** offered me free rent for a 20 hour a week janitor gig I jumped on it. Milo Arts always had a lot of traffic because artist showcase events going on. Various artists would open up their spaces and hire catering and serve wine to their prospective buyers. I love the leftovers of free food and booze. Plus, Micheal Herring was also putting on his plays. So, once or twice a week about a 100 people would show up. That's how Micheal paid the rent for his mini theater. The theater had a kitchen space. Not sure how he slept. I don't think he had a bedroom. The public thought they could tour the artists lofts but I wasn't into it. If they knocked I just didn't answer. That January was very cold and I had to use a space heater. I had little heat in my loft. Heating was a major problem at Milo back then.

Around Christmas of 1994 I discovered that my mother had fell out bed and had laid on the floor for two days. She needed me. But I was in school. Went I discovered her helpless and crying I sprang into action. I got with Senior Services who then had a staff person check on her. They also hooked her up with the meals on wheels programs, and drove her to the store and doctor appointments. Mom love that. Years later I politically lobby the state house for the Ohio "Assisted Living Program". It was obvious that mom needed a family member to live with her. And college was becoming very difficult. I was having problems learning a language at OSU. After dropping out of Latin, and then Spanish, OSU diagnosed me with "language disorder". The wiring in my brain was fucked up! The analyst said it was most likely due to my Mom's use of codeine during her pregnancy which reduce her discomfort. Back in the early 1950 a lot of mothers used codeine to help with their pregnancies. So OSU gave me a "waver" to substitute sign language for Spanish. I could use 15 hours in sign language to fulfill my bachelor degree requirements. Then my academic adviser tried to talk me into a double major which I new was profit motivated. When I advised her I needed to drop out of school she suckered me into hanging on for two more weeks. "Give your self a chance" she said. This push me way pass the deadline for full tuition reimbursement on my financial aid package. It meant I would have to pay back OSU loans. The banks loved that shit! If I had

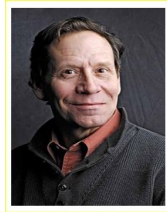
not listen to her bad advice and withdrawn on the 2 day of Spanish class I would have not ended up in so much debt. But to be fair nobody at that time knew I had a problem with language.

The OSU rules at the time said you had 3 days to withdraw from classes without being subject to a financial penalty on your loans or grants. I was under a lot of stress about mom and didn't think to ask for a written statement. My OSU financial advisor told me that because my mom was sick that OSU would "*waive*" the penalty for missing the 3 day window. However, a few months later they reinstated the penalty and turn it over to a collection agency. An undo kindness to be sure! I tried to appeal but OSU said that there was "*no proof*" that a wavier had been issued. I thought I could trust my financial advisor. But somebody in the administration had shot the verbal agreement down. That is when I learned how important paper records were. So, once again I was in debt and jobless. Not only this, but that previous fall quarter of 1993, my paper work for the winter quarter in Spanish mysteriously disappeared. I had to take time away from my mother's care and proved to the OSU Administration that I had records showing that I had followed their rules for the winter quarter in Spanish. All of this leads me to believe that there were certain people in the OSU administration who were seeking revenge for perceived slights to their family members. Nepotism was the lay of the land back then.

Two women in particular were bad news. I made a point of declining their sexual advances as best I could while wanting at the same time to hump their brains out. Looking back I may have been too friendly. I've always found it is hard to say no to a sexy women who wants to have sex. But the emotional bond just wasn't there for me. The Spanish girl, I had gotten friendly with while in philosophy class. I didn't mean to charm her. I didn't realized she was way too involved with my head until it was too late. She told me how much the spanish like to have sex as we were taking walks around the oval. I didn't even realize I was being courted for marriage. Marriage was not an option for me at that juncture.

She had a family member who was in charge of the OSU Spanish program. When I found out she had "*mental*" problems, I bailed. The bitch was nutter than a fruit cake! And I was very familiar with cuckoo! That must have really pissed her off. I had escape her plan! Besides, she was a bad fit for me. One the other hand, the other female I met while I was working in the Law School. She was industrial strength cuckoo! She would steal other employee's food from the fridge and eat it. WTF? I don't want to fuck a food thief. Which was a red flag for me. We had fooled around a lot but she was very tight lipped about her history. Her sister had a popular talk radio show at OSU. Then she took me to meet her shrink were I was subjected to some type of "**CIA MK ULTRA**" mind control bullshit! It left me disoriented and confused for a few days. I felt I had been raped mentally by her shrink against my will into revealing all my weakest triggers. Maybe her shrink was afraid that her nutcase boyfriend might try to harm us. Her shrink didn't want her to date anyone at that point. In fact the nutcase boyfriend did burn down her apartment complex. That was real scary! Top that Jimbo! He also slashed my tires. He wanted me to leave her alone. After the fire she ended it. Confused, I told my fire fighter friend at Fire Station #7 what happen. They immediately launched a arson investigation. Unfortunately, her family was so

well connected with the OSU big wigs nothing came from it. So with all this junk hammering on me I withdrew from OSU on Jan 25th 1994 and began a new life as a Milo Artists. But it was a fools paradise. I was still chasing the rock star dream at that point. I hold no ill will toward these OSU people. They were simply pawns of their own karma. I doubt that they knew the whole story. I believe that they were unaware of all the facts. And, that led them into hurting me and my family like Gale King did.



One of the most eccentric people I ran into at Milo was **Rich Stadler**. Rich was an actor who lived next to me in Loft 109. He worked with **Micheal Herring** putting on his **Red Herring** theater plays in loft 203. Like me he worked free lance for **Rick** and **Donna Mann**. But Rich love to party. He was always smoking and drinking. Rich was a good person and a great actor. Me and **Charles Cicirella** even did the lights and sound on a few of Herring's plays. To me it seemed that Rich was getting laid a lot. There were always female actors coming and going at Rich's door. Most would spend the night and leave in the morning. Other artists who I got to know were the painters **John Piper** and **Jim Morton**. I think that Jim Morton taught classes at OSU. And then there was the former attorney turned playwright **Rick Hole**. I think Herring did a few of his plays at Milo. They would call him "*Dick Hole*" as a joke. Not sure if it had to do with the ladies he ran with? But the most successful of all these artists during my 3 year stay at Milo Arts was **Aaron Schroeder** and **Pat Durkin**. They both had a thriving art business. Aaron had set up in the gymnasium. He would crank out one of a kind objects in his fabrication shop. Later in 1995, Aaron let Jim Shepard film the "**American Face**" video in his studio. Some of these objects were used in that video for American Records. Pat Durkin was in studio #104 and worked turning out custom carpets for wealth clients. Mostly it was fancy corporate board room stuff. He had a few assistants who helped him with these projects. He seemed to be always busy.

One day his brother offered me a \$100 to help him plant 50 pot plants on Federal land in northern ohio. He needed a "*bud monkey*" helper. I need the money so I agreed. So that spring he rented a Avis step van and we load up a bunch pot plants and headed up north. He made me wear a blindfold for the hour and a half drive to and from the farmland area he had scouted. When we got there we unload the plants in 5 different selected spots and quickly got to work putting them in the ground. He was worried about the Patrolling Airplanes who were out to bust us. So we kept a close eye on the sky and hid if we saw anything. After the plants were in the ground he pored dry deer's blood around each of the plant to chase away rabbits. "*Rabbits just love to eat the shit out of these plants*", he told me. Once the plants were watered we skedaddled back to columbus and he paid me. That was a very stressful day for me. But the money really helped me stay afloat. I had no idea how much money he was making. But it had to be over

\$75,000. He told me he did this every year and would scout and switch locations as needed. This was how he was able to buy his house near the park of roses. He told me that there was a network of bud monkeys who had been doing this for years in North Ohio. But after I was paid I wanted no more. He asked me again during harvest time and offered \$200 but I said no. I wanted no more.

Soon after the *Bud Monkey* experience I was coming back to Milo with a sandwich and got jumped by three very angry Crips gang members. The Crips was an alliance of street gangs which is based in the coastal regions of southern California. The leader pulled a gun out and point it at my head. He demanded all my money but I had none. He seemed very disappointed by that. Then he took my sandwich which was all the food I had that day. Back at the time Milo Arts was surrounded by gangs. Normally, I rode my bike and knew the safe streets where I could dodge the gangs. But that day I had a flat on my bike and was starving. So I scraped together the last coins I find which was just enough for a cheeseburger. So there I was facing death and I hear a voice inside me say, *"Do you want to die"* And I thought to myself, *"No, I've got a lot of things I want to do in life"* and I heard the voice say, *"give him the sandwich"*. So I handed him my empty wallet and the sandwich and said, *"I'm an Artist. I live at Milo Arts. None of us have any money. Here, take this. It is all I got"*. He looked at me and kind of felt ashamed that he was robbing a poor person. Then the two other guys said, *"Give the honky-cracker back his sandwich"*. So the guy gave me back my sandwich and told me never to walk his street again. When I got back to Milo I filed a police report and a few months later The Columbus Police raided about 100 Crips and sent them to jail. I'm not sure if these three were in the group that went to jail but I never saw them again.

Even though I had my rent covered I still needed food. So I took a job as a truck driver. The job required a CDL license but the company which had mob connections told me not to worry about it. The next thing I know I'm being trained in a 16 wheel rig with dangerously bald tires. Each day for a week I would take the back roads down to Cincinnati. The guy training me was a mob employee and his job was to teach me how to avoid the weight stations and the highway patrol. The main problem was that the air brakes didn't work very well on our rig and he had to "engine brake" the rig almost all the time. On the forth day we started out around 6 am. If we were lucky we got home about 6 pm. We were hauling 150 Lb tubes of cheeses for the 5 stars restaurants in Cincinnati. We only had to unload the stock at the shipping docks. The trucks were load for us. About 60 miles from Columbus some of slabs of beef broke lose and we had to stop on some desolated back road and secure it. That is when one of the tubes of cheese broke lose and crush my trainer's spine.

I heard him screaming and rushed to free him. He was in real bad shape. There was a back brace in the cab that he was suppose to be wearing when loading and unloading supplies. But we were running late and he did have it on. He was really fuck up and could barely sit. So I had to take over driving the 16 wheel rig. I had no clue how to do that. The rig's brakes were a god dam nightmare! Plus, the wind was outrageous and we sway helplessly back and forth all over the back roads! So there I am, in the middle of bum fucked Egypt, with a my trainer in desperate need of medical treatment, wondering if this rig is going to end-up in a

ditch? It was a dangerous game I was playing. Were the cops going to lock me up for safety violations? Are these bald tires going to blow out? All the time I've got my eye peeled for the cops and hoping like hell that the breaks don't go completely out when I need to stop. I was living the Jimmy Hoffa experience! Squid's at the wheel, red alert folks!

If ever I needed a joint it was then! Somehow against all the odds we were able to get the supplies delivered to the dock. The poor guy tried to help me unload the truck but he could hardly walk. Once we got it handle we hit the highway back to Columbus. Unfortunately, half way back the rig breaks down. Then my trainer says we have to hitchhike to the last truck stop and call the company to send someone to come and help us. Once we handled that, he says we'll have to rent a hotel for the night. WTF? I ain't got no money for a hotel. I hungry, I'm tired and I'm cold. I've been freezing my balls off all day because the rig's heater was broken. So the guys says, he can loan me the money but I'll have to pay him back. Just then, by the grace of god, one of our other trucks shows up and give us a ride back to columbus. When I got back to Milo around 8 PM, Jimbo, who had just recently got back in touch, was waiting. So I explained to him what happen he cracks up. But when your working for the mob you do what your told. They don't play.

Soon after that mess I took another minimum wage job at a donuts factory a few blocks away from Milo. My job was to fill the morning delivery trucks from 5 am till 10 am Monday thru Friday. I worked that gig for about 6 weeks and got sick to death of donuts. I could eat all I wanted for free. But one night they ask me to work a special shipment for overtime pay. There were only about 3 people working with me when some one pointed out some very large rats pigging out some of the apple danish donuts that we were carefully packaging in to boxes for shipment. We were told to pitch those donuts to the trash bin if they had been chewed on by rats. Later I found out that they had a seriously rat problem in the plant. One of the rats must have weight at least 10 pounds. They had called in the exterminators and so started a total war on the rats! This company had bitterly fought the McDonald's corporation over its' trademark and we were forbidden to eat at McDonald's or mention their name on the job. This company delivered it's product to most of the truck stops in Ohio. They had about a 100 drivers. Once I saw the rats feasting on the donuts I quit eating the donuts.

Straight Outta Compton was the debut studio album by rap group N.W.A, which not merely depicted Compton's street violence, the lyrics repeatedly threaten to lead it by attacking peers and even police. Back then the "morality police" was headed by Tipper Gore, Al Gore's x-wife! Tipper had founded the **Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC)** and it was a "Political Response" against the likes of **N.W.A.** and **Frank Zappa**. These "*evangelicals raciest*" sought to end "*Strong language or depictions of violence, sex or substance abuse*" in music, by way of their privileged "*White Anglo Saxon Protestants Leadership*". But what was really ironic was the fact that they had created the black resentment in the first place. They use zoning and election laws to keep the black community out of congress and the middle class. And then there was the rise of their hit-men **Rush Limbaugh** and **Newt Gingrich** who co-oped the steadily growing power of these *evangelicals racists* in congress. These two, along with **Jerry Falwell Sr.**

televangelist conservative activist; more than anybody else protected the *evangelicals raciest* by use of corrupt political machinations! And so the social stage was set.

By 1994 all the street gangs around the Milo Arts hood were blasting **NWA** music in their cars and shooting their guns at the cops. In a way Milo was a fortress. I think the gangs didn't know what to make of all the strange people who lived there. We were poor and weird. That must have confused the gangs. Beside, It was the Cops who they wanted to shoot not the artists. Then one day **Rich Stadler** introduce me to his friend "**ANDY**". Andy had a thing for "*horse tranquilizers*". One day his cat died, probably from eat some of it, and Andy lost it mentally and started shooting his "*gun*" at a columbus police helicopter which was shinning a spot light into Andy's bedroom window. This was common for occurrence in the black hoods. So Andy starts shooting at the copter and the Columbus SWAT team shows up and grabs him then hauls his struggling ass off to jail. But not before Andy kicks the shit out of 4 of them in the elevator. The Crips must have loved that! When the judge hears the case, and see that he is white, he commits Andy to a year in the "nuthouse" for rehab. After serving his time Andy's shrinks get him released with 2 years probation.

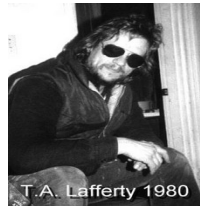
Somehow Rich had made friends with Andy which is how I met him. One day I was coming home from a job fair and Andy was waiting for Rich. He had scored some weed and had a shit load of "fresh horse tranquilizer". So I let him into my studio and we fired up a joint. The weed was way to powerful for me and I sat in my chair trying to cognate but unable to answer the door. When I opened the door there was Old **Tommy Jay** smiling. So Andy handed him a joint and they started snorting some horse tranquilizer together. Next thing I know Tommy Jay is paralyzed and groaning on the floor! To which Andy says because of the terms of his probation he has got to get to work at the gas station. It was shocking to see that Andy had build up his immunity to the horse tranquilizer. And I began to worry about Tommy groveling on my floor. But Andy said Tommy "*would be fine in a few hours*". Of course, the weed made it difficult for me to function, but I was able to keep it together, whereas poor Tommy could not for the life of him, get up off the floor. Then Rich knocked. He was hunting for Andy. He saw Tommy on the floor and said, "*Where did Andy Go? Too Work*" I said, then Rich laughed, and lit out after Andy in a hurry. To this day I can not figure out how in the hell Andy could work a job on that stuff. Finally, Tommy Jay was able to rise to his wobbling feet and humiliatingly left. It was the only time I have ever see "Old Jones" not being in command of his head.

Rich Mehan was one of **Rich Stadler** understudies. He may have had some development issues but wanted to become a actor in the worst way. Stadler felt sorry for him and had taken him under his wing. Unfortunately, Mehan encountered the same fate as me. Mehan use to ware a brick tied around his neck for protection. Not the safest form of protection I think. Mehan thought that if he got jumped by the gangs when walking to and fro Milo Arts he would have a weapon to beat off his attackers. He thought he could use the brick to beat back the gangs. But the fact was the Crips owned the streets around Milo. They jumped Mehan and when he refused to let them rob him and tried to fight back they murdered him. I heard later they used the brick on Mehan's head. I was told

that the brick was the murder weapon. It could have been me. But I had no intention of fighting back. It was a huge wake up call! But I had been raised in a rough neighborhood where street fighting was very common. I knew how to avoid the gangs. In fact, the first artist to get jumped by the gangs was **Charles Cicirella**. Charles was walking home with an ice cream cone when two 8 year olds jumped him and stole his ice cream. WTF? Poor Charles, he really loved ice cream. After Mehan's murder I tried to stay in the building whenever possible.

Shortly after Mehan's death there was a knock on my door and I was served a "summons to court" by my x-wife Kathy. At that point I had no money for a lawyer. What was I going to do? I grew very depressed. So I figured at least in jail I could get medical treatment, food, heat and free room and board. She was seeking back support and a sizable increase a few months before our son turned 18. By that time she had run through her rather "large" inheritance by way of two x-husbands who had "busted" her cheating on them. They basically took all her money in settlement, and now that she was broke, she resented me for not being able to support my son and daughter. WTF? When we divorced she told me the inheritance money had set her up for life. She didn't need or want any child support money from me. She was ok with me going back to college. No problem. The fact was I had given her all the resources from our marriage and taken on all the debts even though I caught her in bed with her lover. Then she went on a 10 year spending rampage buying boat, trips, cars and houses. So by the time of her 3rd divorce she was totally broke. She had run through all of her inheritance. She also borrowed money from her brother that she never paid back. That estranged them. She claimed it was some of her inheritance and that he had taken advantage during settling the estate. I was upset by the court summons. But during a psychic reading I was told I would get totally off the hook.

Then I discovered my x-wife had fucked up by "*notarizing her own court filing*" instead of hiring a lawyer! She was always into pulling shit on me. When I saw that she "Murphy" the court I contacted them. I pointed it out to the judge that she had notarized her own filing. **K-Boom!** Suddenly the case was dropped and she lost her notary license for good. Then the court ruled our kids emancipated and my obligation fulfilled! She didn't like that! Jimbo and I had a good laugh about it. You don't try to pull shit with the courts. Roxanne was pulling the same sort of child support riff on Jim. They had never been married! She didn't have a legal right to child support in Ohio but Jim when ahead and agreed to pay Roxanne through the courts. That is after she took the two kids to Tennessee and disappeared for 7 years without a word. She only got in contact after she lost control of her oldest son. I did try to send child support when I had it by working the Ohio State Fair in the falls, or by giving her my income tax checks. But the brutal truth was I was one step away from being homeless and living on the streets. This economic down turn lasted from 1994 to 1995. And for a long time I depended upon the kindness of others, which sometimes didn't happen, for my food. It wasn't until 1995 that I had established a good working relationship with the temp agency that I started to recover my financial balance.



By March of 1994 I began to work on the Reel To Reel recordings of **T. A. Lafferty, Ted Lust, Mike Rep** and **Tommy Jay**. These recordings were from 1985 to 1993 time period and were, in my view, incomplete. So for the rest of the year I added drums, bass, strings, horns, or lead as needed to flesh these recordings out. **Tommy Jay** had handed the reel to reels tapes off to me and I was grateful for the chance to work on them. I wanted to show my friends how much I had evolved as a recording engineer. It was a very pleasant distraction from all the drama that I was passing through. When I played some of the music for Jim Shepard which included the T.A. Lafferty songs: *Tennessee, The Revelation, Millennium Iconoclast, Hope Skepticism Doubt & Disbelief, Salvation Story, Baby Baby Baby, Big Old Wheel, Doesn't Take Away The Pain, Laura, Monkey Love, River Girl, Time On my Hands, and the David Crosby cover of, Wonder Who They Are?* He was impressed. Not only these songs but the **Mike Rep** cover of *Carrickfergus*. That song was about a town and the subject of the classic Irish folk song "Carrickfergus", which was a 19th-century translation of an Irish-language song (Do Bhí Bean Uasal) from Munster, and which begins with the words, "*I wish I was in Carrickfergus*". The reel project set me on a new music journey. **Tommy Jay** in some cases helped co-produce/engineer some of those tunes. He was a huge help and we used his "studio" out in Harrisburg Ohio and my Studio 110 at Milo as needed. Jim then ask me do his **Lacquer** session at Studio 110. It was the first time he had tried to record since his hand accident. I was surprised how nimbly Jim was able to adapted to the new reality of his wound hand. The accident had really stimulated his muse. Jim always work from the unconscious to the final version of his art. He was always into the stream of consciousness approach of making art.

When **Leland Cain** and **Jim Shepard** showed up for the Milo session at Studio 110 Jim's Right hand was completely bandaged. It didn't show him down. For about a week they knocked out a bunch of new Shepard Compositions that featured Leland on cello and Jim on bass. It was some of the best music he ever did. But for some reason only a few of the songs made it onto vinyl. The really good stuff never saw the light of day. It's my hope that Leland retained some of the ruff mixes and photos from the **Lacquer** session. I'm assuming like most of Jim's other work the masters tapes were destroyed. At the Lacquer sessions we were working with two 4 track decks. Recording in stereo on one deck then overdubbing two more tracks. Then I would bounce the 4 track mix down to the other deck in stereo and Jim would over dub the vocals on the two open tracks. We ended up with 8 tracks in all and Jim and I spent a lot of time mixing them down. Unfortunately, Jim took all the production masters with him which I assumed pass into his estate, and eventually to the dumpster.

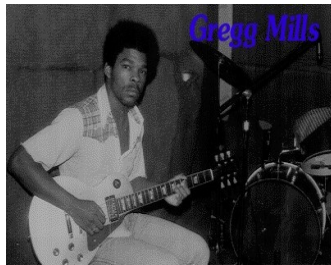
When **Kurt Tuckerman** told me in 2021 that he had to pitch most of Jim

Shepard's archives into the dumpster I was heartbroken. Why would Rudy and Roxanne allow that to happen? Jim really loved those two. But I guess Roxanne's need for revenge over powered her common sense. Kurt told me that they were way beyond salvage and that the family didn't take very good care of their storage. In fact, after his death, it is due to **Charles Cicirella** hard efforts that only a very small portion of Jim's work has made it to vinyl. Cicirella is responsible for the resurgence of interest in Jim Shepard work post death. This knowledge really broke my heart. Jim and Roxanne had both fought so hard for the band. I just could rap my mind around storage issue. Why didn't Gabe step up and take responsibility for his parent's legacy? Jim deserved better than that. After all, it was my legacy also! Why didn't the family ask me to handle that storage problem. I would have paid for profession storage. Luckily, It was Jim habit to send cassettes to his fans. That's how Charles was able to secure a lot of these works from trash bin. No one can argue that **Charles Cicirella** isn't **Jim Shepard's** biggest fan! When the family failed to stay the course, Cicirella step up. However, Kurt also told me that he was able to salvage a "few" of Jim's projects, and it is my hope that they make it to vinyl. As with all things, only time will tell the tale.

By June of 1994 The Columbus Scene began to get notice by the grunge movement nationwide. **Mike Rep** had received some **Donovan** (Leitch) demos from **Rick Rubin**. Not sure how that came about. I think that maybe Rubin was looking for cover versions from **Mike Rep** and **Tommy Jay** of Donovan's new songs. Maybe he was testing out approaches to this new material. He might have hoped that these "brainstorming" covers would be of interest to **Donovan**. Back in 1993, **Rick Rubin** had contacted **Johnny Cash** to record a set of songs featuring **Cash** with sparse instrumentation. Cash's American Recordings succeeded both critically and commercially, and signaled a fresh start in Cash's career. Their nationwide success prompted **Rubin** to search for other artists who would benefit from the same model.

Years later I would adopt this sparse and strip-down folk approach. At the time I didn't have a clue who Rick Rubin was but **Mike Rep** and **Jim Shepard** seemed to be in awe of him. While in the studio with **Tom Petty**, **Rubin** mentioned that he would like to work with **Donovan**. **Petty** suggested that he call **Donovan**, which he did. When **Donovan** agreed to have **Rubin** produce his next album called **Sutras** wheels were set in motion that would end up putting me on the 1996 **GBV**, **V3** and **Spoon** nation tour a year later. I had heard that **Donovan** had prepared over one hundred songs for the Sutras sessions. Holy Shit! Unfortunately, the Sutras LP received mixed reviews and failed to achieve the kind of commercial success that **Johnny Cash's** American Recordings had, but there was a silver lining. There was one song I felt was a hit! It was called "**Chinese Girls**". Somehow **Rick Rubin** had overlooked it? Or maybe **Donovan** had shot it down for cultural reasons? It never made it onto the Sutras LP. So when I heard **Rep** and **Jay's** version I thought, "*Fuckin A! it is a hit*". This was right after my **Bottemfeeders** project which had been the most "*pop*" I had ever attempted. I was feeling my oats! So I got busy and when the dust had settled I had, what I thought was a half way descent version of "**Chinese Girls**". To me it was about Chinese and American women being on equal footing sexually. Just

like the Rolling Stone's "**Brown Sugar**". That is to say I was pleased. But none of my friends except Jim Shepard took notice. Little did I know that **Jim Shepard**, **Jerry Wick** and **Ron House** had entered into contracts negotiations with **American Records**. At the time I didn't pay any attention to the local music scene and was focused on trying to survive the Milo streets as best I could.



Then around July of 1994 **Tommy Jay** shows up with a case of Bud Ice. Woopie! When I played him the backing track of **Mr. Romantic** he jumped all over it. He wrote the words on the spot and then we recorded a video of it. It was about his 13 year relationship with his girlfriend **Chris Brown**. It was one of those magical sessions where everything just flow together. Also, around this time my old friend from my high school days **Gregg Mills** showed up and we recorded "**Boulevard**" which was a poem by **Charles Cicirella** we set to music. We also recorded a **Gregg Mills** original called "**Growing Pains**". Both songs have never seen the light of day. **Mills** was working on his masters degree in music at Ohio State doing classical recitals. He told me it was all a bunch of bullshit having to jump through academia's hoops to secure his degree. But his mother who was a local judge had demand it in exchange for his schooling. Gregg didn't give a shit about the degree. He wanted to play the bars like me. The thing he didn't want to do in life was be a wage slave in some office cubical. So he chose the lessor of two evils and went to music school. But it fucked up his muse. Then later after he graduated he became a alcoholic and died from it. Gregg like so many others I have known drank to cope with his depression. I don't think he felt that rock and roll was a stable occupation. You had to be mentally unbalanced in the head to be rich and famous. Rock Stardom seem such a waste! The British invasion had only washed large amounts social garbage upon our broken wage slave shores. The freedom of Woodstock had been co-opted by the entertainment corporations. By this time top 40 radio had become a crime against humanity in my view. You can't make great art without become trap by money. Art and commerce don't mix, unless it is at a high degree of agitation. Many a writer have sacrifice their nervous systems for fame. There is always a cost to it! Arlus died by drugs. Gregg Casey by drugs. Jim Shepard by suicide. And Kevyn got drunk and broke his neck. This is the way.

In August of 1994 I had ask **Rich Stadler** to recorded vocals on my new song "*It All Turns Red*". Rich had voice over experience from Radio and TV commercials. So, he put a trailer trash spin on my song. Then I ask him to have a go at the Rolling Stones cover "*Ruby Tuesday*" which I also got **Rudy Crash n' Burn** to do in 1997. The results while being big fun were less that spectacular. Next up was **Jim Edwards** another Milo Artist who sounded just like **Eddie Vedder**. His song was called "*If I Said That I Love You*" and it sounded a lot like a **Pearl Jam**

knock off to me. But it was fun to do. Then on Saturday, Oct 1st 1994 **Rick Mann** had the Independent Candidate for Governor of Ohio, **Mr. Billy R. Inmon** give a speech and take questions. But the audience spiraled out of control and order broke down. The show would be featured in the "**Cow TV**" special being produced by a local cable show. The whole thing turn into a episode of the **Gong Show** with the Milo artists asking weirdo off the wall questions while smoking pot, drinking beer and/or other ingredients! I never got to see the final show but I heard it was wild ride!

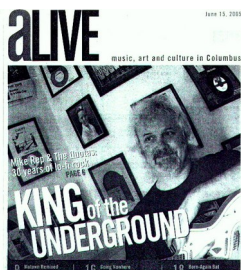
That fall I began doing sessions with **Charles Cicirella, Christopher Campanile and William Furlong**. Furlong and Campanile had been in a band while attending CCAD (The Columbus College of Art and Design). Soon they added Cicirella on vocals and I began to record them in Studio 110. Then around **November of 1994** they formed a band called "**The Sun**" and in early **January 1995** hit the road one cold and snowy morning. The funny thing was they didn't have any bookings but had bought a van which they use as a base of operation. Both Jim and I thought they were crazy. They would hit the road, live out of the van, and hunt for gigs. When the van finally broke down the band split up somewhere out west. It wouldn't be until after the G.B.V.3 tour that Charles would get in touch.



That **February of 1995** my old friend **Hippy Dave** shows up at my door and says that **Arlus Stitch** O.D. at the Taco Bell on East Hudson Ave and High Street. *"It was the drugs Squid. She did way too much and they found her body in the lady's room. I think she wanted to kill herself"*. (see: **A MOUTH FULL OF CHEESECAKE**. By nudge squidfish) I was shocked. Anyone who ever knew Arlus understood that she had reached the lowest point where life it is all about the heroin. I had seen her in 1994 at the Great plains reunion show at **Stache and Little Brothers**. The last thing she said to me was *"I know know you don't want to be my friend but I will always love you squid"*. And with that she disappeared into the darkness. Hippy said a wake was being planned by **Greg Casey** and **Dan Dougan**. This was after Jim Shepard had recovered from his hand accident and re-established contact with me and Charles Cicirella. I was sad about the choices Arlus had made. At the wake all her close friend got up on stage and told a personal story about her

outrageous behaviors. It was all too shocking to hear and was the stuff of legends. In the mean time another Milo Artist name **Ken Yerian** approached me about doing a ragga session for his friend **Pappratt** who were refurbishing printers with **Sam Brown**. Also during this time I worked as a light and sound man for the **Red Herring Theater Company** on the "*Head Cheese*" and "*Conga Lines*" plays. Around that point **Jim Shepard (V3)**, **Ron House (The Thomas Jefferson Slaved Apartments)**, and **Jerry Wick (Guant)** had just entered into contracts negotiations with American Recordings. When Jimbo asked me to help find a new drummer for **V3** I suggest **Sam Brown** to Leland and Jimbo. This was after I discovered a "pile of saw dust" from where Sam had placed his drum kit during **Pappratt's** ragga sessions. At that point **Sam** was going through a lot of drum sticks. I knew instantly he was the only drummer who could replace **Rudy Crash n' Burn Smith**. So I told Jimbo and Sam was in. All that spring and early summer I recorded projects while the new **V3** tested out their stagecraft. Jim and I even did a session for *Tommy Dark's Step Sister* called "*Right Hand Man*" for the "**Straight Up, No Chaser**" CD. For that session Jim and I had placed a couple of mattress over the door to cut down the volume. I think that **Tommy Dark's** session was the loudest of all the recordings I had ever attempted. I remember Rick Mann my landlord/employer banging on my door demanding us to stop. But Jim and I just blew him off.

That **March of 1995** my mother's house on 4th ave burnt down and she had to move in with my sister. There wasn't too much I could do to help her. She had lost all her family photos and letters and was traumatize by the experience. She had to start over. My sister ended up taking her in. By that time I had decided that I had enough of the Milo life style and started planning to move out. I had started working with a temporary employment agency who got me a full 40 hour a week gig with Ross Labs. That gig lasted till October 1995 to November of 2000. I got no benefits or vacation but it was good solid income. I was working in a office cubical as a customs import/export specialist humping a computer. I was my own boss but every quarter I had



to meet with the big wigs and explain the fee situation. It was a much better gig than my previous government jobs. So I started to save my money up for a deposit on a new apartment. On **May 15th 1995** the newspaper **Columbus Alive** featured **Mike Rep** on it's cover. It had a **Jerry Dannemiller** of **Moviola** 3 page story about Rep's involvement in the columbus music scene. It was Mike Rep and Tommy Jay who introduced me to **Bruce Cole** of the **Screamin' Mee-Mees's**. **Bruce Cole** and **Jon Ashline** had put out a few project over the years that had gained some notice by the cow-town vinlyheads. So when Rep ask me to work on the **Twinkeez** Tribute project I jumped on it. **The Twinkeyz** were a punk rock band formed in 1977 in Sacramento, California. The band's leader and



songwriter, Don Marquez, took the stage name **Donnie Jupiter** upon forming the **Twinkeyz** in 1977. On the band's 1977 single, "*Aliens in Our Mist*" b/w "*Little Joey*", the band's members were listed as **Donnie Jupiter** (vocals/guitar), **Steve Bateman** (vocals, percussion), **Walter Smith** (vocals, guitar, bass), and **Wit Witkowski** (bass). **Keith McKee** also performed on drums, and

Dave Houston was credited as engineer. I not sure whose idea it was to do the Tribute project but I know **Bruce Cole** and **Mike Rep** were behind it. At the time I had no clue who the **Twinkeyz** were. I've never care to be in the loop business or culture wise. I suppose my critical lack of ambition has wasted a lot of good opportunities for me. But it is not in my nature nor do I care to join the merry go round at this juncture in life. Even **Tom Lax** seem to like the idea so it was all hands on deck for the squidster. Looking back I'm surprised that they even wanted me on board at all. So I began to write letters to **Bruce Cole** and quickly found out that he was more way eccentric than the rest of us. With the Tribute project in the can we quickly moved on to the "*Plow-boy Blues*" session out at **Tommy Jay's** barn towards the end of **May 1995**. What roll-a-coaster ride that was! Tommy had bought some top shelf whiskey and we were suppose to take turns during the session but when to bottle came to me I chugged downed the whole dam thing and blacked out. I don't remember nothing about the session other than waking up and puking my guts out. The next day I could barely walk as Tommy gleefully played the mix back to us. Somehow, someway Tommy was able to make a "*satin purse out of a pig ear*"! I was shocked and ashamed at my behavior and very surprised at the end product. A few days later I received a note from **Kevyn Kasualty** who had a batch of songs that he wanted to do as a solo project. Unfortunately, he never followed up. Shortly after the "*Plow-boy Blues*" I moved out of Milo on **June 30th 1995**. But not before the "*Strawberry Fields Cover*" session out at Tommy Jay's Barn. That cover featured **Stacy McCloud**/vocal, **Jimbo**/vocal/guitar, **Tommy**/drums, **NS**/vocal/keys, and **Jerry Felty** bass. It had been a wild ride and I needed a break from all the madness. I was still looking for a place to stay. Then in **August of 1995** Tommy Jay's Dad passed away and things really slow down for me. My sister owned a property on *Kimberly Avenue*. That **January of 1996** I moved in. Problem solved. It was one street away from the *Musico Recording Studio*. **John Hall** had been an institution when it came to pressing vinyl in Columbus Ohio. Almost all that bands from the 1960s to the late 2020s went to Musico to have there music pressed on vinyl.

As I settled in to my new space I discovered that my new 19 year old roommate had tried to blow his brains out with a gun. When I talked to him about it he seemed to get depressed so I just left it alone. Unfortunately, over time he decided that he didn't want musicians hanging around. Maybe it remind him of the his failed suicide attempt? Slowly we began to clash over my music projects. He felt he owned the house which was not the case. I should have tried to work it out but I was way "*too selfish*" about wanting to record. So after a few major conflicts with him my sister asked him to move. He did but was bitter about it. Once he left me and Jim Shepard wasted no time. We got busy setting up a studio a and rehearsal space. With him gone it was party time. By **March of 1996** Jim ask me to go on his **V3/GBV** tour. At first he asked me to handle guitar but I didn't want to go there with him. I knew he would rip me off money wise. So we comprised. He needed someone to handle the merchandise table and troubleshoot problems for him during the tour. We bought a large stock of tee shirts and set up a silk screen and began to print them. Also, Jim had some books of his writing commercially made. So I became Jim Shepard's road dog. See: *Life on the Road with Guided by Vodka. (The G.B.V.3 Tour of 1996)* by Nudge Squidfish

